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INTERACTIVE MULTIMEDIA ADVERTISING
AND ELECTRONIC COMMERCE ON A HYPERTEXT NETWORK

Field of the Invention

This invention relates to providing interactive advertising and secure purchase opportunities on a network, and particularly to a system and method for providing targeted, interactive, multimedia advertising and electronic commerce capabilities through a hypertext network.

Background of the Invention

A hypertext file is displayed on a computer as a page through software called a browser. A page comprises links that, when selected by a user, cause another page to be displayed (known as the linked page), cause another part of the presently displayed page to be shown, or else cause a computer program to execute. A

5 hypertext file is written in a programming language such
as Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) .

 A logical grouping of hypertext files is called a
site. Sites may reside on different computers. A set
of sites that are interconnected by links is called a
10 web. A site on a first computer may be effectively
linked to a site on a second computer by connecting the
first and second computers through a network. An
example of a set of sites residing on different
computers interconnected by a network is the World Wide
15 Web (WWW), which is a set of sites written in HTML on
computers interconnected by the Internet. Each site on
the WWW is known as a website.

 A site resides on a computer known as a server,
which is accessed through a network by a user utilizing
20 a client computer. Pages at a site are viewed by the
user through software called a browser, which resides on
the user's client computer. Here, a client computer is
a system with a microprocessor and means for storing
data and/or software such as random access memory and/or
25 a hard disk drive, and which is capable of communicating
with a hypertext network. The client computer is
capable of providing output for display to a user, for

5 example through a video display. Such output may take
the form of at least one of textual, graphic, animation,
video, audio, or virtual object media. The client
computer is also capable of accepting input from a user.
Such input may be provided by means such as a keyboard,
10 a mouse, a telephone touch pad, a television remote
control, and so on.

A web can be used as a channel for disseminating
commercial information, including advertisements, as
well as effectuating electronic commerce. Electronic
15 commerce here refers to the process of buying and
selling on a web.

Advertising on a web may be static or dynamic.
Static web advertising operates by displaying an
advertisement image at a fixed location on a page
20 displayed to a user. The advertisement image may be a
link that, when selected by the user, displays a new
page that conveys additional information about the
product or service featured in the static advertisement.
The advertisement image link generally disappears when
25 selected, and is replaced on the screen by the linked
page.

Dynamic web advertising operates by displaying a

5 sequence of advertisements. Dynamic web advertising is implemented using proprietary, stand-alone advertiser software that must be downloaded to the user client and executed by the user. Stand-alone here means software that operates independently of any other application
10 software. Like the static advertisement, the dynamic advertisement may also be a link, is displayed at a fixed location on a page, and generally disappears after it is selected and replaced by a linked page.

An example of a dynamic web advertising system is
15 the Point Cast Network. FIG 1 shows this known stand-alone system that is installed as an independent software package on the client computer. Information including news, weather and sports is transmitted to the PCN software on the client computer and is updated
20 periodically. The user may view news stories by selecting the news button 11, the weather by selecting the weather button 12, and so on. Advertisements are shown in a corner of the screen, in the advertisement area 13.

25 Each advertisement 14 is a link. When the user selects an advertisement link, PCN launches a browser and loads and displays a page 21 (FIG 2) at a

5 predetermined address, known as a Universal Resource
Locator (URL) 22. The browser replaces the
advertisement area 13, so PCN no longer displays
advertisements to the user. Alternatively, PCN may be
configured to launch a separate stand-alone browser,
10 such as the Netscape browser, when an advertisement link
is selected. In this case, the stand-alone browser
appears in front of and obscures the advertisements
presented by PCN. However, the browser can be moved to
another part of the screen, thus revealing the ongoing
15 stream of advertisements from PCN.

Nonetheless, viewing both PCN and the page on the
stand-alone browser in their entirety is practically
impossible, and the user generally must choose whether
to view the one or the other, but cannot typically view
20 both.

The advertisements that appear on the PCN comprise
graphic and animated media. The advertisements are
downloaded from a server to a client computer and
occasionally updated (along with the rest of the content
25 on the PCN) when the user selects the update button 15
(FIG 1). A set of advertisements are stored on the
user's client computer and played in sequence in a loop.

6

5 The sequence repeats with a duty cycle dependent upon
the number of advertisements downloaded.

. In another known advertising system called the
Hypernet, advertisements are streamed to the user while
permitting the user to continue to browse the Internet.

10 When an advertisement is selected, a page is presented
to the user.

For these known systems, each advertisement only
appears for a short period of time, and then is replaced
by the next advertisement in the sequence. The user has
15 no control over the content or order of the
advertisements, and cannot pause, skip, replay, or step
through the advertisements at will. Nor can the user
make a secure purchase directly using the PCN service.
The same advertisements are sent to all users,
20 regardless of user preferences.

Both static and dynamic advertisements are limited
in that they only provide a one-way flow of information
from the advertiser to the user. At best, these
advertisements provide a telephone number that the user
25 must call to purchase or learn more about the advertised
product, or a link to a page with additional information
from the advertiser. Additional information from the

5 advertiser must be requested through the advertiser's
page that is linked to the advertisement, or verbally
over the telephone from an advertiser representative.

Another disadvantage of known advertising systems
is that, when an advertisement is selected by a user,
10 the advertising process is generally interrupted as the
linked page is displayed to the user. In systems where
the advertising process is not interrupted, it is
difficult or impossible for the user to view both
advertisements and the linked page in their entirety.
15 Thus, other advertisers are essentially prevented from
presenting their advertisements while the user is
pursuing further information on another advertisement.

Furthermore, a linked page generally contains other
enticing links, thus reducing the likelihood that the
20 user will soon (if ever) return to the website on which
the advertisements are displayed.

A superior system of advertising on a web would
provide the user with the capability to interact with
and control the presentation of advertisements; engage
25 in electronic commerce without leaving the web; easily
obtain additional information regarding a product or
service featured in an advertisement without

8

5 interrupting the display of further advertisements; and
establish communications with a sales representative of
the advertiser through the client computer without
leaving the web.

These features would enable an advertiser to more
10 effectively target a purchaser, sending advertisements
that are responsive to the user's needs. They would
also give the user access to extensive information about
the advertised product or service, resulting in better,
more informed buying decisions. Advertisers would be
15 able to take advantage of the low cost of selling
electronically, thus lowering their cost of sales and
improving their profitability. Competition under these
circumstances would result in lower prices and greater
values for the purchaser.

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Summary of the Invention

The present invention provides a system and
method for advertising and carrying out electronic
commerce on a web using advertising software that is
25 transmitted from a server to a client computer over a
network at a user's request. The advertising software
operates as an overlay to a conventional, known browser,

5 such as the Netscape browser, dividing the user's client computer display into an advertising area and a browser area.

The advertising area is provided with buttons for the user to control the presentation and content of
10 advertisements, and for the user to view multimedia information, securely purchase an item, clip an electronic coupon, and communicate with a sales agent concerning a presently displayed advertisement.

The user may pause the stream of advertisements,
15 view a previously displayed advertisement, or skip forward to the next advertisement to be displayed.

The browser area retains the original functionality of the underlying browser and operates independently of the advertising area, except that certain buttons (e.g.,
20 control buttons and electronic transaction buttons) in the advertising area cause pages to load and display in the browser area when selected. The independent operation of the browser area means that several advertisements may be displayed to a user in the
25 advertising area while the user browses a single page in the browser area. This is superior to known systems wherein only one fixed advertisement may be shown on

5 each browsed page.

The server includes a home page by which the advertising service may be accessed by the user. The server also includes a help page by which assistance in using the advertising service may be provided to the
10 user.

In accordance with the present invention, the advertising server streams advertisements in sequence to the client computer more or less continuously. This is in contrast to known advertising services, which
15 download a set of advertisements to a client computer that are stored and shown in a repeating loop to the user.

Also in accordance with the present invention, the advertisements shown to the user are interactive
20 multimedia advertisements, comprising one or more of text, graphics, animation, video, audio, and virtual object media that include at least one link to a page that is displayed in the browser area when selected. The multimedia features of the advertisements of the
25 present invention are advantageous because they stimulate users to buy who are especially responsive to video, virtual object browsing, audio, animation, text,

5 graphics, or any combination thereof, whereas known advertising systems only appeal to those who are receptive to text, graphics, animation, and combinations thereof.

A user may select advertising topics, whereupon
10 advertisements in the selected topics are transmitted to the user. Advertisements may also be selected by deducing user areas of interest based upon the content of pages on the web selected by the user for viewing.



The present invention provides a superior system
15 and method for providing targeted, interactive, multimedia advertising and electronic commerce capabilities by which advertisers and users may exchange information and buy and sell goods and services.

20 Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG 1 shows a known advertising service for a web.

FIG 2 shows another a known advertising service for a web displaying a page linked to an advertisement.

25 FIG 3 shows an embodiment of the present invention.

A. Insa!  ~~FIG 4 shows an~~ 

5 Detailed Description

The present invention provides a new and superior system and method for providing advertising and electronic commerce capabilities on a web.

10 In accordance with the present invention, the content and presentation of advertisements may be controlled by the user, who may also securely purchase goods and services without having to leave the web.

The present invention is interactive, providing means for sending information from the user to the
15 advertiser, as well as vice versa. This results in more targeted advertising and better, more pertinent information being sent to the prospective purchaser.

The system of the present invention, shown in FIG 3, comprises a server 51 and client computer 52 that
20 has a browser, with the server 51 and client computer 52 interconnected through a network 53. The client computer 52 comprises a microprocessor, a display device such as a screen, storage devices such as a hard disk drive and random access memory, and input devices such as a
25 keyboard and mouse.

Advertising software on the server 51 is downloaded to the client computer 52 and executes to act as an

5 overlay to the browser. In one embodiment, this software
is written in the Java programming language, and is
loaded and executed on the client computer 52 when a
user selects an advertising service link on an
advertising service page displayed to the user through
10 the user's browser. This mode of operation is superior
to known advertising systems that execute exclusively
outside of the client computer 52, because the system of
the present invention is able to obtain information
regarding the client computer 52 that may be screened by
15 a firewall between the client computer 52 and the server
51. For example, the present system is able to obtain
the exact network address of client computer 54 (FIG 3a)
that is connected to the network 55 through a local area
network 56, whereas known systems would only be able to
20 determine the network address of the network server 57
on the local area network.

While the advertising software executes on the
client computer 52 (FIG 3), the browser retains its
initial functionality to browse hypertext files, and the
25 advertising software appropriates a part of the display
screen of the client computer 52.

In another embodiment of the present invention

5 shown in FIG 4, the functions of the advertising service provider in accordance with the present invention are divided among several servers interconnected with each other and the client computer 61 through a network 62. Advertisements are streamed to the client computer from
10 an advertisement server 63. Secure purchase transactions are handled by a transaction server 64. Multimedia information is transmitted to the client computer from a multimedia server 65. Assistance is provided to users from an information server 66.
15 Communications are established between a user and an advertiser using a connection request server 67, which is connected to a public telephone network 68.

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a

~~REFERENCE CALLME BUTTON APPLICATION~~

a2 ~~CROSS~~

The advertiser software acts with the browser to
20 present to the user a display, an embodiment of which is shown in FIG 5. The user's screen is divided into two areas: the browser area 31 and the advertisement area 32. The browser area and the advertising area operate essentially independently so that several advertisements
25 may advantageously be displayed to the user while the user is browsing a single page displayed in the browser area.

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5 The browser area 31 retains all of the controls
originally provided by the browser, including the file
features 33, the edit feature 34, the bookmarks feature
35, and so on. Thus, the browser area continues to
function essentially as the original browser (before the
10 advertising software was downloaded and executed). In
this embodiment, the area for viewing pages 31 has been
decreased to accommodate the advertiser area 32.

 The advertisement area 32 comprises a control area
36, a display area 37, and a transaction area 38. The
15 control area is provided with a help button 39, a pause
button 40, a step back button 41, and a step forward
button 42. Each button acts as a link. In one
embodiment, when the user places the mouse arrow 49 over
a button, an explanatory bubble 50 appears nearby that
20 comprises a short description of the functionality of
the button.

 When selected by a user, the help button 39 loads
and displays an advertising service help page in the
browser area 31. In one embodiment, the help page has a
25 table of contents, a searchable index, and general
information about using the present invention. The
table of contents and index comprise links to other help

5 pages that provide detailed information on specific topics of interest concerning the advertising service to the user.

The pause button 40 halts the progression of the advertisements shown in the display area 37, which are
10 streamed to the client computer in sequence from a server. The advertisement shown in the display area 37 at the time the user selected the pause button 40 persists in the display area 37 until the user again selects the pause button 40, at which time the next
15 advertisement is shown in the display area 37 , and the progression is resumed. In this way, the pause button functions as a toggle.

A predetermined number of advertisements shown in the display area are cached on the client computer. The
20 present invention provides the capability of stepping back to previously displayed advertisements by selecting the step back button 41. When this button is selected, the progression of advertisements shown in the display area 37 is suspended, and the user may review previously
25 displayed advertisements one at a time. The progression may be resumed at any time by selecting the pause button 40.

5 In order to move forward through advertisements,
the present invention provides the step forward button
42. When selected, the step forward button causes the
next advertisement in the progression to be displayed in
the display area 37. Thus, if the step forward button
10 42 is selected while reviewing previously shown
advertisements, the next previously shown advertisement
will be displayed in the display area 37. In this way,
it is possible to move forward among previously
displayed advertisements.

15 Likewise, if the step forward button 42 is selected
during the progression of streamed advertisements from
the server, the presently displayed advertisement will
be immediately replaced with the next advertisement in
the progression.

20 The pause button 40, the step backward button 41,
and the step forward button 42 provide the capability of
suspending the progression of advertisements, moving
backwards and forward among previously displayed
advertisements, and immediately replacing a presently
25 displayed advertisement with the next advertisement in
the progression.

The advertisements shown in the display area 37 may

5 be links, may contain links, and/or may function as
image maps with selectable areas. Image maps are known
in the art. The advertisements comprise at least one of
textual, graphic, animation, video, audio and virtual
object media.

10 Because the advertisements are streamed from a
server rather than downloaded as a set and played to the
user in a loop, the present invention can make choices
about which advertisements to display to the user that
are responsive to the user's current viewing habits.
15 Thus, if a user is selecting and viewing pages in the
browser area 31 concerning outdoor activities, the
present invention can select advertisements for camping
gear, which are streamed from the server to the client
for display to the user. This advantageous capability
20 to dynamically target advertisements is not provided by
known advertising services that download predetermined
advertisements in sets.

This dynamic targeting capability is in part due to
the capability of the present invention to operate with
25 a browser such that the progression of advertisements in
no way interferes with the independent operation of the
browser.

5 An embodiment of the present invention as an overlay to the known Netscape browser is shown in FIG 6. The browser area 81 maintains all of the functionality of the Netscape browser, while the advertising area 82 comprises the features shown in FIG 5.

10 The transaction area 38 is provided with a sales agent button 43, a media clip button 44, a secure purchase button 45, a home page button 46, and an electronic coupon button 48.

When selected by a user, the sales agent button 43
15 establishes communications between the user and a sales agent for the sponsor of the advertisement presently shown in the display area 37. In one embodiment, a connection request is forwarded to a connection server, and a telephone call is established in accordance with
20 the invention disclosed in U.S. Patent Application No. ~~CROSS REFERENCE CALL ME BUTTON APPLICATION~~ ⁴³ As is shown in FIG 5, the user has placed his mouse arrow 49 over the sales agent button 43, and an explanatory bubble 50 has appeared nearby, indicating the function of the
25 sales agent button 43.

In another embodiment, the sales agent is called directly from the user's client computer, and packetized

5 voice communications are established through a data network such as the Internet. The user may obtain additional information regarding the product featured in the advertisement, or may make a purchase from the sales agent.

10 The media clip button 44 generates a multimedia display shown in the browser area, when selected. In an embodiment shown in FIG 7, an advertisement 91 for movie information is shown in the advertising area 92. While it is displayed, the multimedia clip button 93 is
15 selected by a user. As shown in FIG 8, a video clip 101 of a scene from the movie is shown to the user in the browser area 102, accompanied by audio of the actors' voices. In another embodiment, a promotional video clip for the movie is shown to the user in the browser area
20 102, accompanied by audio narration. The data for the multimedia clip is streamed from a server to the client computer on demand from the client computer.

The secure purchase button 45 provides the capability to effectuate a secure purchase transaction
25 by the user. When a user selects the secure purchase button 45, a secure purchase sequence is initiated for the product or service shown in the presently displayed

5 advertisement. A secure purchase sequence comprises at least one screen displayed to the user in the browser area 31. In a process known as "upselling," the present invention displays advertisements related to the item being purchased by the user during the secure purchase
10 sequence. For example, if the user is purchasing a pair of shoes, advertisements for belts, shoe polish and foot care products are displayed to the user in the advertising area 32 while the secure purchase sequence pages are displayed to the user in the browser area.

15 In an embodiment shown in FIG 9, the present invention presents the user with a form 110 in the browser area 111 by which the user provides secure purchase information such as credit card number 112 and number of items to be purchased 113 to the advertiser.
20 The contents of the form are forwarded to the advertiser using in a secure fashion. Numerous techniques for transmitting such data via secure means are known in the art. These techniques protect the confidentiality and integrity of the transmitted data, and generally provide
25 means for authenticating the sender of the data. The advertiser then debits the user's credit card and ships the selected product.

5 In another embodiment, the user has pre-registered secure purchase information with the advertising service of the present invention. This information includes the user's name, shipping address, credit card number, credit card expiration date, and authentication
10 password. When the user selects the secure purchase button 45 (FIG 5), he is prompted to enter his password through a form shown in the browser area 31. If the password is correct, a secure purchase order indicating the product and the user secure purchase information is
15 forwarded to the advertiser, which debits the user's credit card and ships the product to the user.

 In one embodiment, when a user selects the home page button 46, an advertising service home page is displayed in the browser area 31. In another
20 embodiment, when a user selects the home page button 46, the home page of the advertiser sponsoring the advertisement presently displayed in the advertising area 32 is shown to the user in the browser area 31.

 In accordance with the present invention, an
25 electronic coupon may be selected, stored, and redeemed at a user's request. In an embodiment shown in FIG 10, an electronic coupon 121 appears in the advertising area

5 that is electronically "clipped" and stored when
selected by a user.

In another embodiment, an advertisement appearing
in the advertising area 37 (FIG 5) states that an
electronic coupon for the secure purchase of a product
10 may be stored (or "clipped") by selecting the electronic
coupon button 48. When the electronic coupon button 48
is selected by a user, an electronic coupon is stored in
a file on the user's client computer.

The present invention may also be used to
15 distribute conventional coupons more conventionally. In
an embodiment shown in FIG 11, when the electronic
coupon button 48 (FIG 5) is selected by a user, the user
is presented with the option of choosing whether the
coupon be sent to him via the postal service 131,
20 facsimile 132, or e-mail 133, or else printed locally to
the user on the user's printer 134. If the user selects
the postal service option 131, the user is prompted to
enter his mailing address 135, and a printed version of
the coupon is sent to the user through the mail. If the
25 user selects the facsimile option 132, the user is
prompted to enter his facsimile telephone number 136,
and copy of the coupon is transmitted to the user via

5 facsimile. If the user selects the e-mail option 133, the user is prompted for his e-mail address 137, and a copy of the coupon is transmitted to the user via e-mail. If the user selects the print option, a copy of the coupon is printed on the user's printer.

10 The electronic coupon comprises data such as the item to which it pertains, and the economic value of the coupon. In one embodiment, the electronic coupon is redeemable for a fixed monetary discount on an item by which the purchase price is reduced when the secure
15 purchase transaction is effectuated over the network. This is carried out electronically, as the present invention searches the client computer for electronic coupon files for pertinent electronic coupons during a secure purchase transaction. In another embodiment, the
20 electronic coupon is redeemable for a percentage discount on an item.

The control area 36 (FIG 5) also comprises a content control window 47 that provides the capability of personalizing the advertisements that appear in the
25 display area 37. The content control window 47 includes a list of topics. In one embodiment, these topics include shopping, travel, and leisure. When one or more

5 topics are selected by a user, they are highlighted, and advertisements pertinent to the highlighted topics appear in the display area. When a selected, highlighted topic is again selected by a user, it is deselected, and advertisements pertaining to the
10 deselected topic are no longer targeted for display to the user. In this way, the topic selection process acts as a toggle.

In one embodiment, advertisements outside the highlighted topics are interspersed with advertisements
15 within the highlighted topics and shown in the display area 37.

The present invention advantageously provides the capability of selecting advertisements to show to the user based upon the content of the pages viewed by the
20 user in the browser area. In one embodiment, if the user browses a page regarding the State of Hawaii, the server streams an advertisement regarding travel and leisure activities in Hawaii to the user's client computer. In another embodiment, if the user browses
25 several pages regarding mutual funds, the server streams an advertisement regarding a mutual fund to the user's client computer.

5 In one embodiment, the present invention carries
out this content-sensitive advertising by conducting a
keyword search of a page requested to be displayed on
the client computer by the user. Keywords are obtained
by noting words that appear between TITLE headers in
10 HTML documents. For example, a page that contains the
code:

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<TITLE>Bill's Favorite Surfing Spots on Molokai</TITLE>
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the keywords "surfing" and "Molokai" would be extracted
as keywords.

15 After extracting the keywords, the keywords are
compared to a database index, which cross-references
keywords with topic names. Thus, in the present
example, the keyword "surfing" matches topics "outdoor
adventure" and "water sports." "Molokai" matches the
20 topic "Hawaii."

Each topic in the database is correlated with a
series of URLs for advertisements that relate to the
topic. Thus, the topic "Hawaii" corresponds
advertisements for the "Airline Deals to Hawaii by
25 TravelNow" and "Luau Hawaiian Hotels," which are now
streamed to the user and displayed in the advertising
area 37. In this way, the user's viewing habits are used

5 to effectively target advertisements to the user that
are pertinent to the user's interests.

Advertisements may be targeted in accordance with
the present invention based upon a user profile. In one
embodiment, the user profile is provided by the user.
10 who completes the entries of a form displayed in the
browser area 31. The form comprises entries for the
user's name, address, e-mail address, age, income level,
hobbies and the like, and a submit button which
transmits the completed form to the advertising service
15 when selected by the user. Advertisements are targeted
to the user based upon the information provided in the
form according to methods known in the art.

Advertisements may also be targeted to a user in
accordance with the present invention based upon an
20 audit trail of the user's clipped electronic coupons.
In one embodiment, a file is maintained comprising the
name of a user, a list of electronic coupons clipped by
that user, and the date on which each electronic coupon
is clipped, and whether or not each coupon has been
25 redeemed. This information is used to target
advertisements to the user based upon collateral
products that cooperate with or complement the items for

5 which the user has selected electronic coupons. For
example, if the user has selected electronic coupons for
a food processor, a cutlery set, and a refrigerator,
advertisements for a blender, barbecue utensils, and a
stove would be displayed to the user.

10 Advertisements may also be targeted to the user in
accordance with the present invention using an audit
trail of purchases made by the user. In one embodiment,
a list of items purchased is stored in a file comprising
the name of the user, the items purchased, information
15 about the items (such as price), and the date each item
was purchased. Advertisements for related and
complementary products to those purchased would be
displayed to the user.

 Advertisements may also be targeted to a user using
20 an audit trail of advertisements selected by a user. In
one embodiment, a list of advertisements selected by a
user is stored in a file comprising the name of the
user, advertisements selected, and the date each
advertisement was selected. Advertisements for related
25 and complementary products are displayed to the user.

 The present invention is thus capable of targeting
advertisements to the user in a variety of ways.

5 Although an embodiment of the present invention may
require a user to register with the advertising service
and provide a user profile to receive advertisements,
such user registration is not a requirement per se of
the present invention. On the contrary, numerous other
10 embodiments, including those mentioned above wherein
advertisements are targeted using audit trails of
clipped coupons, selected advertisements, user purchases
and the like, can be implemented in ways that provide
advertisements to a user without requiring the user to
15 register with the advertising service.

The present invention advantageously provides a
superior method for charging an advertiser for an
advertisement displayed to users through the advertising
service. Whereas known static advertising systems
20 charge the advertiser based upon the number of times the
advertisement is seen by users and/or the space taken up
on the screen by the advertisement, the present
invention allows the advertiser to specify a
predetermined amount of time for which an advertisement
25 is shown to a user. The cost of the advertisement
increases as the amount of time for which the
advertisement is displayed to the user increases.

5 The present invention advantageously provides a
system and method for providing interactive, targeted,
multimedia advertisements and electronic purchasing
opportunities to a user on a hypertext network without
impairing the user's regular access to that network. In
10 accordance with the present invention, the presentation
and content of the advertisements may be controlled by
the user, electronic coupons are provided to the user,
and the advertisements selected for transmission to the
user are based upon the user's interests as revealed by
15 the content of pages selected by the user on the
hypertext network. The system and method of the present
invention thus provide a more efficient, targeted, and
meaningful way to provide advertisements and conduct
electronic commerce on a hypertext network.